RESTORATION REVIEW

The Restoration Mind . . .

RESTORATION AND RENAISSANCE

In this series on the restoration mind we are seeking to present a larger and more meaningful understanding of the term *restoration* as it relates to the effort to restore primitive Christianity to a modern world. We trust that the reader will come to see the significance of our use of *mind* in this context, for part of our thesis is that the Restoration Movement is, or should be, a matter of attitude or a kind of character more than a plea for form, ritual or institution. It has more to do with heart and mind than with externals. External forms may be important as *means* to the higher end of binding man back to God, which is the meaning of religion. It is also the meaning of restoration as it describes our movement: *restoring man to God by means of the Living Pattern, Jesus the Christ.*

History has its lessons to teach when it comes to both restoration and renaissance. Our thesis in this essay is that there are values in the ideal of renaissance that are transferable to our concept of restoration, and that they bear close affinity to each other both as movements in history and as descriptions of the ideal. The restoration mind is thus the renaissance mind, and the "Renaissance Man," who has even found his way into the dictionary, enriches our concept of what a Restorationist should be. Or to put our thesis another way, a better understanding of the Renaissance will enrich our concept of the possibilities of the Restoration.

If one starts with the dictionary, he finds that these terms have more in common than that they both are found under the R's. "Renaissance" is defined as *a new birth, rebirth, revival,* coming as it does from a French word meaning "to be born anew." This fits with an idea that we have long emphasized in this journal: the dawning of a new day for the brotherhood of disciples. It is the call for a renaissance, a new birth. It is a plea for renewal through recovery.

"Restoration" is defined as *reinstatement to a former position, restitution for loss or damage, bringing back into a former or unimpaired condition.* This makes restoration too a call for renewal through recovery. In both ideas there is regard for the past, for today's revival is based upon what has gone before. They both reach into the past, laying bare the original foundations, in order to renew the present. Even if restoration is limited to its meaning in English history, referring at it does to the restoration of the monarchy after the Puritan rule under

Volume 13, No. 5 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **May 1971**

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The Renaissance is especially significant in history because it marks the transition from the medieval world to the modern age, coming as it did in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries. Beginning in Italy, it spread throughout Europe, and then went on to influence

the entire world, including nations not yet born. In observing its chief characteristics we will notice the striking parallels it has to the restoration ideal.

1. *The Renaissance found its sources for renewal in the rich cultures of the past, especially Greek and Roman.*

Erasmus, the star of the Renaissance, insisted that Greek culture was the supreme achievement of Western civilization, and that Roman culture was a close second. Drawing upon these sources, he produced new biblical texts in both Greek and Latin and laid the groundwork for modern biblical research. It was Erasmus who declared that the problem with Luther was that he had hit the priest's belly and the pope's pocketbook. And it was he who flatly turned down Pope Paul III when he offered to make him a cardinal. He is a good example of the way things were changing by 1536, the year of his death. In those days art and science, as well as literature, were experiencing a new birth, inspired by the foundations laid by the Greeks and Romans long centuries before. So it is with the restoration mind.

It does not ignore history lest it has to repeat the mistakes of the past. It reverences the story of man's struggle to be free, and it is eager to learn whatever history has to teach. He sees the past as the prologue to the present, and that in all history there is a continuity of events. Ours cannot be a cut flower civilization, cut off from the soil and climate that gave it its character. "The church, for better or for worse, is what it is because of what it has been. And what the church can be now and in the future depends in part on the vast resources that can be drawn from her past.

2. *The Renaissance was a slow, gradual transition from the darkness of the medieval world.*

Historians call the medieval age "the dark ages" because men were not free to be creative and exploratory. Science was hampered by the dictates of ecclesiastics. Scholarship was limited to the obscure and abstruse thinking of Scholastic philosophy. Education awaited the invention of printing, which could not be until men were free to think and write.

But the light of the Renaissance did not burst forth suddenly. There was an affinity with the best of the past, and seeds of reform had long been planted in men's hearts, though slow in germinating. This is to say that "the Dark Ages" had some light, for there were always some brave souls working for a better day. It was a work of patience. The restorationist too realizes that men and events need time, and that renewal is the gradual unfolding of the contributions of many sacrificial people over a long, long time.

3. *The Renaissance restored the dignity of the individual and the spirit of humanism.*

It was a time when even monks, like Rabelais of France, cried out against monasticism, which placed its system above the individual. True scholarship makes a man more humane and enlightened, and should free him of superstition and fanaticism. In criticizing monastic

life Rabelais described the glories of what he thought would be an ideal education, anticipating what we have in a modern university. Humanism is the very opposite of the ecclesiastical mind that prevailed before the Renaissance, for it stresses knowledge and reason rather than authority and ritual. It believes in the goodness of man and in man's ability to build a free and responsible society, once it is liberated from the impediments of ecclesiasticism. The humanists of the Renaissance criticized the popes and priests for their love of power and for their hypocrisy.

Humanism is of course a form of atheism, for it goes so far as to exalt man to the neglect of God. It is man-centered rather than God-centered. Yet it made an important contribution to Christianity in that it helped to rescue the individual from the indignity of an ecclesiasticism that insisted that man is made for its institutions rather than its institutions for man.

4. *The Renaissance turned man's thought to this world and restored the secular spirit.*

The medieval world was shut up within the confines of the Roman church with all its demands for authority and tradition. Little thought was given to building an enlightened society, for man was taught to be other-worldly in his thinking, if he thought at all. Politics and economics, literature and art, science and education were all under the control of the church, and no new idea had any chance of survival unless it conformed to tradition. So non-conformist scientists like Copernicus and Galileo had a hard time of it.

The Renaissance mind was this-worldly in that it wanted to renew man's situation in this life, leaving the next world to take care of itself. It was secular in that it was concerned for human problems here and now, and it sought solutions based on reason, science, industry. It considered the church to be an obstacle to human progress, married to its traditions and hampered by the superstition of "a pie in the sky by and by."

The restoration mind is also secular and this-worldly, and it owes much to the Renaissance for saving Christianity from an obscurantism that is blind to human misery while counting its heavenly blessings. We are *in* this world even if we are not *of* it, and since God loved this world so much as to give His son, we too love it and seek to be a blessing to it.

5. *The Renaissance conquered the whole of culture, changing its character by giving it a new freedom.*

The Renaissance man was a man of culture, which included the whole of what man can and should be. Leonardo da Vinci excelled in almost all fields of knowledge. Michelangelo was poet, painter, architect, sculptor. Kepler gave us a new science, writing a treatise on Mars even as early as 1609. Machiavelli explored political science while Balboa and Magellan explored the world.

It was a cosmopolitan spirit, for men thought of themselves as citizens of the world rather than of anyone country. Artists and musicians created works that transcended racial and geographical lines. They began to think in terms of the basic unity of man and of man's conquest of nature for the building of a better world.

The restorationist accepts Paul's view that believers are to "take every thought captive to obey Christ:" We are to capture the culture of the world and turn it to the glory of God. News media, television, cinema, publications are all too often left to the devices of Satan. These we are to capture, and by *capturing* them we do not kill them, but preserve them, inducting them into service for Jesus. So with all of science, industry, technology, education, government, art, literature. We bring them into obedience to Christ, to whom they rightfully belong anyway since he possesses heaven and earth.

If there remains any doubt as to what the Renaissance has meant to us, it only remains to be said that the Renaissance fueled the fires of religious reform that resulted in the Reformation. It set the stage for the Industrial Revolution, ushering in the modern world such as we know it. We only need to look at the underdeveloped countries of the world to realize what these enlightening centuries have done for the Western world in particular. Here is part of our challenge, for much of the world has yet to experience a renaissance. We have enough believers that we could create a Christian renaissance that would have its impact on all the world, but especially on the malnourished, illiterate, deprived nations of earth.

The spirit of renaissance-restoration must first be realized in our own out-look and our own personal culture. We must be a free and open people, bound only by the constraining love of Jesus. We must restore the concept of God's people as the salt of the earth and thus become the renewing power that actually changes men's lives and their institutions. As commandoes of Jesus we conquer everything from families to universities for him.

A world-wide renaissance, inspired by Christian love and service, will redeem the world and usher in the millennium. The world is ours to inherit, but only as we reach out and claim it for Jesus, whom God has made the heir of all things. — *the Editor*

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THE TWO UNITIES

By Warren Lewis

In Eph. 4 we are presented with the most systematic thought of the entire New Testament on the subject of the unity of Christians. Here the realities of salvation in Christ, the importance of spiritual maturity in the fruits of love and brotherly affection, and

practical advice for maintaining the peace of the Church are all drawn together into a single theology of unity.

After a masterful presentation of the cosmic, universal miracle of the Gospel of Christ and what it means for the salvation of the world, in chapters 1-3, Paul makes an application for Christian living based upon this divine teaching. He urges the brethren to lead a life worthy of such a divine reality, to lead a life of unity.

The basis of this unity is two-fold: something spiritual and something doctrinal. In verses 2-3 he lays down the absolute necessity of certain spiritual fruits which *must* be in evidence if there is to be unity. There cannot be unity in doctrine alone. There cannot be unity either in forced agreement or in unconscious agreement. There cannot be artificial unity that ignores the problems. But there cannot be unity at all if there is not a selfless lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearance in love, and an eagerness to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Where there is no unity, we may reason in reverse order, there must be lacking these spiritual gifts. Where these spiritual gifts are lacking there must certainly also be lacking salvation. This is however, the first unity, the unity of the Spirit. This unity is based on no doctrine, no interpretation of Scripture, no understanding, no issue: it is predicated and it is maintained simply and solely on the basis of the spiritual unity of brothers and sisters who are experiencing the reality of Christ in their lives, that is, the Holy Spirit.

There follows Paul's list of the seven-fold basis for doctrinal unity. He lists seven points on which there *must* be at least a general doctrinal agreement. If these seven areas of doctrinal content were not held by Christians, there would in fact be no Christianity. And these seven unities are, according to Paul: one body (the Church), one Spirit (the Holy Spirit), one hope of our calling (the hope of eternal salvation), one Lord (Jesus Christ), one faith (that *Jesus* is the Christ, Son of God and Saviour), one baptism (immersion *in* water in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins and renewal by the Holy Spirit in the inward man), and one God (the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ).

After giving this list, Paul describes the process of coming to maturity in the second unity which he is describing, the unity of the faith. Here he envisions a life-long, age-long process controlled by the glorified Lord Christ who is dispensing blessings and gifts through his Holy Spirit. He gives gifts to men, measure upon measure to the various ranks and orders of Christians, according to need, according to ability, and all with the view of equipping the saints that they may become servants of one another in order to build up the body of Christ. And this whole process is aimed at the goal of the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. When it is attained, it will be a mature manhood, a measuring up to the fulness of the stature of Christ (Eph. 4:7-16).

The means of this process is the inter-locking, inter-working unity of the Spirit maturing us towards the unity of the faith rooted in the seven-fold basis of doctrinal unity in the area of faith and knowledge, and grounded upon the above-mentioned spiritual fruits and gifts in the area of the unity of the Spirit.

He goes on in Eph. 4:32 to say: “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Here is the test of love and the proving of unity. God in Christ forgave us when we were considerably more sinful than we are now, when we were vastly more mistaken and in error than we are now. But now, in Jesus Christ, we are in a position to be forgiven no matter what our sin or error or mistake might be. Therefore, *forgive!*

Here is Paul’s wise understanding that every one who goes to heaven will go there in spite of his errors and sins. No one, not me or you or the person with whom we agree the most, is absolutely right in every detail. And yet we never become so wrong that we are unforgivable. Since I can never be 100% right, you are going to have to accept me even though I am to some degree wrong. Since you are never going to be 100% right, I am going to have to accept you with all your short-comings. We are to forgive one another even when we cannot see our own mistakes.

To what extent can a Christian be wrong and still be a Christian? Paul has given the answer: as long as a man remains tractable, manifesting the unity of the Spirit and desiring to maintain the bond of peace through all those fruits and gifts, and as long as he does not deny his faith in the seven doctrinal unities. He remains my brother and in my fellowship as long as he is this way, and I am bound to forgive him of any other error, no matter what it is. He too is obligated to forgive me of any other errors, for there can be no requirement beyond the seven unities.

The second kind of unity is the unity of the faith. This will never be fully realized until we get to heaven, so it is something we are always striving for, full stature in Christ. Every newly baptized babe in Christ begins this process. Each new generation must study for itself and have its own experiences in “bodily growth, up-building itself in love.” Never in any one man’s lifetime or even that of an entire generation of people will it be possible to say *We have arrived.*

We must not expect every one to agree on everything doctrinally, for this is humanly impossible. But unity is not based on total agreement, for even if we were in total agreement growth in understanding would stop. So, we preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace even while we are building up and tearing down, climbing and laboring towards, the unity of the faith. But the basis of it all is the seven unities of the one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. These are the building blocks of doctrinal truth.

As long as a brother preserves the unity of the Spirit and is true to the seven unities of the faith, no matter what other disagreements may arise, no matter how wrong we think he is or what heresy we think he holds to, he remains our brother in Christ and he continues to be in our fellowship. We are to love and respect him and welcome him as a Christian, a first-class citizen in the kingdom of God. We forgive him if we think he is wrong, and we are to teach him the error of his way; but if after we have explained to him what we think is the more perfect way of the Lord, he still believes that his position is the right one, we are still to receive him regardless of his supposed error. This is proper since we too are wrong on some things, and when we realize our own wrongs it is easier for us to forgive the wrongs of others.

If someone were to ask brother Paul: "Do you mean to say, Paul, that you would fellowship a man who is in error?" Paul would answer: "Is there any Other kind?"

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GOING OUT AMONGST THEM

The story is told of Gautama, later known as the Buddha or Enlightened One, that he left the comforts of a palace to get acquainted with the world out there. The son of a ruler, he knew nothing of suffering and hardship. Once outside the palace he saw a poor man starving and a sick man suffering. He saw death for the first time as a corpse passed by him, being carried out for burning. This caused him to ask, *Is all life full of pain?* He was told that life was full of suffering and that it ends only in death and that it is the fate of us all.

Nothing would satisfy Gautama but to leave his family and palatial comforts and go out into the world in search of the answer to the human predicament of life of suffering. He wandered for years, consulting with wise men, studying sacred writings, meditating. Like Solomon before him, he made a pragmatic test of every theory and tried every scheme, to see if he could come up with the answer to man's problem of suffering. Finally he came up with his answer, which became the basic tenets of Buddhism, the religion of some 470 millions today in the orient.

The root of all our misery, he concluded, is our ignorance and the *desire* born of ignorance. Overcoming desire is therefore basic to oriental religion, which comes by seeing through the illusion of one's separate existence, thus losing one's self in service to others. Serenity is thus possible in this world, by overcoming selfish desire, and nirvana (the perfect bliss) in the next world. All this laid the groundwork for Buddha's Eightfold Path

and the Four Noble Truths, which make Buddhism the most ethical of all the non-Christian religions.

All this happened because a rich prince, with the right ingredients of character, got out amongst the people. Had he stayed within his majestic surroundings, satisfied with his own proud comforts, the world would have been the worse off for it. Once he got out amongst them he was touched by what he saw, people like himself suffering from want, an experience he had never had.

Francis of Assisi, Italy is a similar story, though his was motivated by an undying desire to be like Jesus. He too was born of the rich, and his prominent father disinherited him when he insisted upon living a simple, ascetic life. It was a dramatic moment when his father took him before the bishop to disown him, only to have his son disrobe himself before them all, avowing that he wanted nothing in this world except to serve God by ministering to the poor and needy.

It was the world out there, the world of agony and suffering, that touched Francis. Earlier in life he was given to selfish pride and pleasures, and it took sickness to cause him to take spiritual things more seriously. Once while riding along on horseback he saw a pitiable leper along the road, covered with sores and misery. Dismounting, Francis went to him and embraced him, identifying with his suffering. The rest of his life he gave to the ministry of the poor and needy, especially to lepers, resolving all along to take Jesus as his example.

Born in 1181 as he was, he knew only the Roman Church, and yet his message to the despised of earth was of the goodness and mercy of God rather than any sectarian doctrine. He was always a layman and never performed “priestly” functions, but was content to do the most menial tasks in leper camps as he spoke of the love of Jesus. He went on to found what is now known as the Franciscan order, but even before his death it moved away from the strict mission that he set for it.

We should thank God for men like Gautama and Francis, even though they are far from our own religious tradition, for they were so touched by human suffering as to dedicate their lives to their fellow man. But it would have never happened if they had remained within the narrow confines of their selfish little world. Graham Greene spoke wisely when he said that “We always have to choose between suffering our own pain or suffering other people’s. We can’t *not* suffer.” Thank God for those who choose to bear the sufferings of others rather than revel in morbid self pity.

It is alarming to realize how easy it is for us to be insulated from the troubled world even as we move about in it. We can cut out our own beaten path in the world around us and remain virtually untouched by those who are less fortunate than ourselves. I have been impressed that at nearly every great university I have visited in many nations, including our own, there is squalor and poverty in the same neighborhood. It is common to see an

elegant cathedral towering above a community that is largely made up of the disadvantaged. It seems to be such a cruel contrast. The very things the university and the church stand for appear to be contradicted by conditions at their very door.

A case can be made for "the Ivory Tower" attitude on a college campus, for it will be soon enough for young people to get involved in the world's problems once they leave college. Let the four years in college be a time of study and preparation. Isolation in the tower will pay dividends later on if it means that young people will go out better prepared. Too much social action while they are students will erode the process of preparation. I had rather trust a physician who devoted all his energies to learning while in medical school than one who divided his time between study and medical reform. We are saying that there is justification for not "going out amongst them" if one is preparing himself so that he can do more when he does go.

But how can we justify a congregation or the individual disciple of Jesus, especially our leaders, for isolationist attitudes and practices? We criticize the hippies and "the weird set" for their involvements while we remain frozen in our real estate. We hardly have time to serve humanity for always going to services where there is no service. Our people are not out where the action is. Hardly do we make a hospital visit except to see someone special. We do not call on the shut-ins, the aged, the poor, the imprisoned. We are out of touch with the very people who our Lord came to minister to. Seldom do we cross racial, social, denominational lines. We are walled-in by our own kind: white, middle-class, affluent Americans.

There is no way to estimate the good that would come if a congregation called off its Wednesday evening meeting in lieu of a "night of ministry." That night each person or family would "go out amongst them" with the view of serving Jesus by serving humanity. Some of them could visit other churches, if for no other reason than to be friendly to Pentecostals, Mormons, and Seventh Day Adventists, or just plain Baptists. Some could visit the jails or call on the aged in the many rest homes that have popped up in every community. There are always old folk who long for someone to read to them or write letters for them. It is silly to be going to church all the time in a world that needs help like ours does.

It is noteworthy that both Gautama and Francis, though religious leaders, never served humanity in church buildings. Gautama moved through the streets where the people were. Francis did a lot of manual work, mending houses and fences for the poor, then moving on to leper colonies. Instead of tying up several hours of a couple's time in a building, where only sermonizing goes on, why not encourage them to do such things as gather up a few of the children of tired mothers who have to work and spend those hours with the kids at the park?

Jesus was this way. He did not come to minister to himself but to others. He was out where the action was, where the people were, where the problems were. How beautiful that passage that reads: “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Co. 8:9). People did not have to search out some cathedral to find the Master. He was out amongst them in the twilight zones of life.

As a professor and editor I see the risk of being too far removed from the ordinary experiences of those I seek to influence. It is all right to walk with kings if one does not lose the common touch. I can isolate myself in a world of books and ideas, office chores and editorial details, to the point that I remove myself from the nitty-gritty problems that weigh upon my students and subscribers. I do not want to be that kind of teacher that knows nothing about the world around him except what he sees by peeking out from behind a book or what he sees from an office window. Nor do I want to be an editor that is out of touch with all the different kinds of people around the world who read what I write. As I sit here writing I like to recall to mind the many homes and individuals who I know personally or have corresponded with extensively to whom this article will be mailed. I like to think about the kind of work they do, the problems they have, their triumphs and their tragedies, their limitation of time or schooling.

In one of my classes this year at Bishop College was a married student who began to be absent and fall behind in his work. I learned that his wife was ill in a Dallas hospital. So I went to the hospital to visit his wife, to meet her for the first time. She was weighed down and strapped up with all the contraptions that go with serious surgery. She was unable to talk and did not need visitors anyway, so I spoke quietly with her Mother who was sitting with her and made a quick exit. Later I called again when she was able to have company and got in my visit. But once the young man was back in class trying to unravel philosophical problems that were difficult enough without having to worry about a sick wife, I had a better grasp of the situation as the professor. And he could see that I was a fellow human being who cared, and not some college professor far removed from his troubled world.

This is why I am pleased to get out amongst those who read this paper as I have been doing lately in these mini-meetings. I meet readers of this journal whom I would never know any other way. All sorts of folk in all sorts of places. We do a lot of talking and studying, praying and visiting. Surely I am the one who is most benefitted. I sit down to this typewriter with a better understanding of what needs to be said these days, though I may not be able to say it as it should be said.

I have just returned from a little meeting in the sticks of Ohio, a little place that is not even on the map. My travel agent told me that I couldn’t go to such a place, for it doesn’t exist! But we did find it by driving a hundred miles or so from the Columbus airport, and I

found nestled in those hills some of the dearest and most delightful people on earth. They meet in a little chapel beside a country road, inherited from the Methodists who have long since deserted the place. They seldom see a “real preacher,” for they are small and poor and nobody is interested much in them. Besides, you can’t find the place! They are mostly Church of Christ folk, instrumental and non-instrumental, though they use the instrument.

They were most courteous to any prejudices that I might be harboring, so they offered to dispense with the instrument while I was there. I insisted that they do as they always do, and let me accommodate myself to them. Besides, insofar as fellowship with my brethren is concerned I have declared instrumental music a non-issue. One brother played the piano and another thumped a mandolin. At one point in the service they softly played *How Great Thou Art* while I looked out through the back door of the chapel at the sunset in those glorious Ohio valley hills. I was tempted to say, under my breath at least, “Almost thou persuadest me!” That evening I delivered a message based on the first paragraph of I John, dealing in particular with the two things that the apostle desired for his readers: (1) that they might enjoy fellowship with each other and with God, and (2) that their joy in the Lord might be complete. I showed the relationship between joy and fellowship and observed that we have become a people with little of either.

While there I called on a resident minister in a nearby town; an old brother now confined but who received a sample copy of my publication 18 ago and is still a subscriber; a bedfast sister whose body is warped by paralysis but who keeps a song in her heart; an 82 year old man who ventures no further than his front porch but fondly recalls the vigors of youth; a couple who married in the twilight of life, the man being a bachelor until he was 70; and still others.

The last couple I found most endearing. Life was mostly spent before they ever married, but they are finding something of a bonus in each other. She worked as a charwoman during the years of her widowhood, so she could easily adapt herself to the simple life they live together in the Ohio woods, selling a few eggs and tending a modest garden and orchard. They love dogs, cats and birds, sharing their modest home with all three. They have both a piano and an organ, and when they play them together, nine cages of birds join the chorus, the dogs whine, and a merry tune fills the house.

While I was there their most beloved little dog lay dying in a house apart. The brother, now in his 80’s but still vigorous, told of how the dog would lay in his lap and cradle his head under his chin, and would sometimes give him a kiss on the nose. He would go out to the dying dog and try to feed and comfort him, only to see a helpless response. His wife would urge him not to go anymore, for it only grieved him.

I thought of Francis of Assisi amidst all the cats, dogs and birds, of how he would talk to animals as if they were persons, and would even preach to them. His disciples testify that sometimes when he was preaching to the birds, the swallows would sing too noisily,

but would quieten down when Francis would urge them to! With such as that coming out of the history books, how could I begrudge an old couple, with too few to love them, for their infatuation with a dog. I wasn't quite ready to pray for the dog's healing, but I was sympathetic and I understood — and I listened.

As I bade this dear couple goodbye after meeting on Sunday, the old brother came by and warmly held my hand, thankful that he had a new friend. I got the latest report on the dog and listened to his concern for a neighbor who was to have surgery the next day. "I'm not long for the world myself," he said, his eyes watery. His wife came by and laid her head on my shoulder and wept-not for the dog nor for the sick neighbor especially. She was weeping because there was somebody around who had showed some interest in them, someone who seemed to care. Someone who came to see them and fell in love with them.

There they trudged down the country road, single file, back to their home, their dogs, cats and birds. I was touched that they would bear with them a tear for me, a new friend and brother. There they go, I thought, like the poet's last leaf on the tree, not long for this world, true, and with little of what the world has to offer. But there was something real about them, something sweet and gentle. There was suffering going on in their world and they cared.

I turned away with a lump in my throat. At first I did not speak to those who drove me away. Finally I said, "You know, the Bible tells us that it was the simple folk who gladly listened to Jesus. There goes the kind of people who would gladly hear Jesus if he were in their midst today."

I was thankful that I had got out amongst them. I only regret that I am not a poet so that I might catch the drama as well as the truth of such experiences. May God grant that it will make me a tenderer, more loving, more understanding teacher and editor. — *the Editor*

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CHRISTIANITY AND COMMUNISM: TWO RELIGIONS IN SEARCH OF MAN'S REALITY

By David Reagan

We often think of Christianity and Communism as being diametrically opposed to each other. In reality, the two movements have many similarities, for Communism, like Christianity, is a religion. Both have their sacred scriptures and their prophets, saints and missionaries. Both are infused with a messianic spirit which points toward the ultimate redemption of man. Both even have their God, the God of Communism being the inevitable will of history.

Of course, these similarities are rather superficial in nature, but in one respect, at least, both movements are substantially alike --- both are rooted in a spirit of humanitarianism. Both Karl Marx and Jesus of Nazareth were moved to compassion by the suffering of the masses.

The depth of compassion which characterized the humble carpenter from Galilee is well known to all peoples, Christian and non-Christian alike. The Gospels speak repeatedly of His concern for the multitudes of common people and for those individuals in particular who were desperate, despondent, and derelict. Jesus loved the masses. He healed them, He fed them, He spiritually nourished them, and He comforted them with words of compassion: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

Karl Marx was also a man of great sensitivity who was moved to compassion by the miserable plight of the masses. He was shocked and sickened by the suffering of his world-the mid-1800’s, the age of the Industrial Revolution. He was repulsed by the slums and filth and exploitation, by man’s inhumanity to man. Writing with phrases ringing with righteous indignation, he described the horrors of *laissez-faire* capitalism in graphic terms and denounced them bitterly:

> Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and the bourgeois state: they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overseer, and above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is . . .
>
> Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labor.
>
> No sooner has the laborer received his wages in cash, for the moment escaping exploitation by the manufacturer, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

The stinging tone of Marx may differ drastically from the soothing words of Jesus, but the compassionate motivation of each was remarkably similar. Furthermore, it should be remembered that Jesus also bitterly denounced those whose lives were devoid of love and concern for their fellowman, calling them “blind fools” and “miserable frauds” and likening them to “white-washed tombs filled with dead men’s bones.”

No, Christianity and Communism do not differ in the wellspring of their fundamental motivation, for both are humanitarian in impulse. The crucial difference emerges in the solutions which they propose for the human condition, solutions which are shaped by their concept of the nature of man.

The Christian concept of man is paradoxical, for it is both inspiring and pessimistic. Man on the one hand is pictured as the noblest of creatures due to his rationality and spirituality. But on the other hand, man is presented as fallible and thus incapable of perfection. Man is, therefore, destined to live in sorrow and suffering. The explanation of this paradoxical situation rests in the fact that man has rebelled against God. This rebellion has resulted in spiritual death and the consequent triumph of man's selfishness, arrogance, and pride.

The Christian solution to this tragic situation is the reconciliation of man to God through faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Not only will such faith open the door to a perfect life of happiness in the hereafter, but equally important (and often overlooked), it will serve as the basis for a rich and meaningful life in the present. In other words, Christianity is not just an other-world religion. It has relevance to life today, for true faith in Jesus will lead one to a life of love, and love is precisely the power which can alleviate the human condition. In short, the Christian sees the root of suffering in the sin of the human heart, and thus he urges that the heart of man must be transformed.

Marxism contains a much more optimistic view of man, for man is pictured as being capable of perfection. This difference is due to a different concept of the source of human misery. Whereas the Christian locates the source of evil in man due to his separation from God, the Marxist dismisses God and locates the source of evil instead in man's separation from reality. In other words, evil is rooted not in man but in the economic system of exploitation whereby man has been separated from the fruits of his labor.

Accordingly, the Marxist advocates that the solution to suffering is to be found in the reconciliation of man to the fruits of his labor through the socialization of the economy. This, in turn, will lead to the destruction of all economic classes and their exploitation of one another. At this point, man will be transformed, societal conflict will end, government will wither away, and the millennium will arrive.

The fundamental fallacy of Marxism is to be found in its central concept that a restructuring of the economic system will result in the transformation of the nature of man from selfishness to selflessness. This thesis simply is not true. The history of the implementation of Marxism stands as stark testimony to the fact that communist leaders have proved to be as selfish and ruthless as the non-Communist dictators that they have replaced --- in fact, even more so.

This is the powerful message of *The New Class,* the most significant book published on Communism since the *Manifesto* of Marx. Written by Milovan Djilas, the former Vice President of Yugoslavia under the Tito regime, the book lays bare the corruption of Communism in practice.

Djilas points out that because of the basic humanitarianism of Marxist theory, ". . . a Communist movement always begins as one of the highest idealism and most selfless sacrifice, attracting into its ranks the most gifted. the bravest, and even the most noble intellects of the nation . . . Everywhere, Communism begins as an aspiration toward a beautiful ideal society:" However, Djilas emphasizes that this is true only while the movement is young, before it has tasted the fruits of power. Once the movement begins its struggle for power, its immoral means become a corrupting influence whereby the search for power as a means to a higher end is transformed into a search for power as an end in itself. As Djilas graphically describes it:

> Through moral crises, through political intrigues and insinuations, mutual calumniation, unreasoning hatred and barbaric encounters, through debauchery and intellectual decadence, the movement slowly climbs, crushing groups and individuals, discarding the superfluous, forging its core and its dogma, its morals and psychology, atmosphere, and manner of work . . .
>
> The wonderful human characteristics of an isolated movement are slowly transformed into the intolerant and Pharisaical morals of a privileged caste. . . the former heroes . . . become self-centered cowards without ideas or comrades, willing to renounce everything --- honor, name, truth, and morals --- in order to keep their place in the ruling class and the hierarchical circle.

As these words indicate, the major transformation of man which the implementation of Marxism has wrought is the tragic one whereby man is degraded to the level of an animal, for the practice of Communism has led to a denial of the very aspects of man's nature which constitute his uniqueness. The Marxists have demeaned the rationality of their subjects by imprisoning them in an intellectual dungeon of forced conformity. In like manner, they have denied the spirituality of man by demanding that he reject God and surrender his complete allegiance to the State.

The problem with Marxist humanitarianism is that it has narrowly concerned itself only with the needs of the physical body. Yet, as Jesus so poignantly put it, "Man cannot live by bread alone:' Nor did the Lord intend this statement to mean that man could live by love alone! Jesus was concerned about the whole of man. His mission on earth was primarily spiritual in nature, but He supplemented His spiritual message by feeding and healing the masses. The Lord fully realized the importance of man's physical needs, and

thus in His model prayer He prayed first that His Father would provide His children with their "daily bread."

True Christianity is not simply concerned with life after death. True Christianity is a revolutionary movement with a radical impact on life in the present, for it demands a fundamental change in the character of man. True Christianity calls for man to love his fellow man, and the implementation of this concept would revolutionize the world more radically than the wildest dreams of any Marxist. — *Austin College, Sherman, Texas*

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BOUND VOLUMES AVAILABLE

All those who ordered the 1970 bound volume of *Restoration Review,* entitled THE NEW HUMANITY, have been sent their copy. Copies are available at $3.00. The volume contains all issues for 1970, along with an introduction and a table of contents. It is black hardcover with red dust jacket, and it matches the other volumes of the series. The other volumes available are:

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READERS' EXCHANGE

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

So much of what was said in the February and March issues is what we have felt, but we have not been able to put our finger on it as precisely as you have done. We were in the Church of Christ but have been disfellowshipped by the governing body. — *Indiana*

As a non-instrument advocate, I had never been close enough to an "instrument man" to know what one was like. The first thing I noticed about this "untouchable" was that he was a regular-type human being. This means he had his life to watch out for, that he had his likes and dislikes, his aspirations and responsibilities. But what I noticed most of all that was this man had love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control. I could find nothing against these things And when we discussed the instrument, he showed much love and understanding, something I had not necessarily done in the past. — *New Mexico*

Your work is the most encouraging thing I have seen in Churches of Christ in almost 20 years. May God richly bless your labor of love is my prayer! You may know that Tampa has been a center of one of the newer "splinters" among us with former Florida Christian College as the hub. — *Florida*

We're praising the Lord for the work he is accomplishing through you. We have been so blessed by the *Review* copies we have borrowed from friends. Now we'd like to subscribe for our own copies. — *Idaho*

Thank you for sending me *Restoration Review.* It is so nice to read something that doesn't send you to hell just because you disagree. You have probably read the lines below that I picked up somewhere.

"From cowardice that shrinks from new truth,

From laziness that is content with half truth,

From arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,

Oh God of truth, deliver me." — *Florida*

Your theme is restoration and in my mind this means that soon we must deal with the women in the church. If the church is to move into more reality, then women must be considered too. We cry "recognize us" for we too have intelligence, potential and much ability, way above the child-care basis. How long have we been the second class citizens of the church!

The ladies here planned a totally new Workshop, one aimed at uplifting and inspiring their sisters in Christ. We have lectures by women and a series of 3 classes all taught by women, some of whom never dreamed they could do this sort of work. We had 150 women from several states. We had another in 1970 with 369 women involved. . . Women come when some MEAT is offered to them and when it is presented in joy and love and not shoved down their throats. We did not deal with how to be a good wife and mother. As important as that is, we have that shoved down our throats till we could die, and serving Christ is more than this. — *New York*

Campbell and all of the earliest Restoration fathers were premill or millennial to some degree. As I study and attempt to answer questions about Revelation and the second coming, the thinking of the early Christians about the eschaton seems more and more relevant. Those disciples had a sense of history, and the Last Days were the final scenes, the denouement of God's plan. Is it any wonder that, as actors in that climax, they found their age exciting? And is it not strange that we who must be 1900 years closer than they, are so complacent about the whole matter? It seems possible, though speculative, of course, that the movement of the Spirit now may be setting the stage for the very last acts, though we know that there may be hundreds of years yet. Or it could be tomorrow. — *Texas*

HOW ABOUT MODERNISTS?

It is going to be interesting to see what you and the Christian Church will do with a modernist like Howard Short . . . whom I assume to be a modernist as the Disciples generally are. I want to see how you and Brother Ketcherside grapple with the problem of modernism on the part of sincere immersed believers. So far you have carefully skirted that problem. — *Ohio*

Howard Short is referred to because he is editor of *The Christian,* official organ of Disciples of Christ, and a dear and good brother who has participated in numerous unity efforts among us as well as the Ecumenical Movement at large, including being an observer at the Vatican councils.

I pass the above along to our readers so as to illustrate how our folk continue to burden themselves unnecessarily by serving as judges of other men's consciences. The freedom that Christ gives us liberates us from having "to see what we will do" about this or that brother. I will accept him as my brother, that is all I will do, and it is all that I should want to do.

Modernism is like the Mother Hubbard dress that covers everything and touches nothing. To the Amish folk we are modernists if we ride in cars and have plumbing in our homes. But if a brother is having problems with things like the virgin birth of Christ and the resurrection of the body, assuming that the writer refers to such things, I will love him all the more and seek to lead him closer to Jesus, however far or near he may be. This was Alexander Campbell's attitude toward Barton W. stone when he was questioning the preexistence of Christ. We are to remember that God has made us *brothers* and as blood kin we will be most reluctant to look for reasons to draw the line on one another. Love will hide a lot if we will but love. Something is wrong when we go looking for something to hang on each other.

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RESTORATION REVIEW is published monthly (except July and August) at 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas. Leroy Garrett, Editor. Second class permit at Denton, Texas. Subscription rate is $1.00 per annum; 50 cents in clubs of 6 or more.

Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Drive, Denton, Texas 76201.*